

House Republican Press Release

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Democrats Guilty Of Insurance ‘Scam’ On Business With ‘Pay Or Play’ Measure



Republicans Say Hypocritical Job-Crushing Proposal Work of Unions

HARTFORD – House and Senate Republicans today called a union-sponsored attempt to impose outrageous insurance premiums on Connecticut’s largest employers a “job-killer” that exposes fraudulent Democrat claims that they are sincere about promoting a pro-jobs agenda.

House and Senate leaders said a bill aired before the Labor Committee today requires certain retail franchises - some of the most familiar businesses in Connecticut that employ thousands of workers - to pay \$5,000 a year, per employee into an insurance fund run by the state. It mirrors the “Pay or Play” proposal from last year that would have forced large private sector employers to match the most expensive health care plans offered by the state, or risk paying huge penalties to a state-run account.

“The Democrats have once again shown themselves to be disingenuous with this proposal. At the outset of the session they tried to claim they wanted to create jobs. Clearly, they again intend to penalize employers who want to create opportunities for those who want to work,” House Republican Minority Leader Robert. M. Ward said.

He added, “They changed the name of the bill from ‘*Pay or Play*’ to ‘*Fair Share Health*’ and actually made it more anti-business.”

Senate Republican Leader Louis DeLuca of Woodbury said, ““The Democrats just don’t get it. They cannot trumpet a ‘Connecticut Jobs for the 21st Century’ agenda on one day, and then allow virulent anti-business legislation to be seriously considered on the other. Whether or not this legislation ever becomes law, the very fact that the House Majority Leader sponsors the press conference and the Labor Committee then entertains the bill for a public hearing, it does immeasurable damage to this state’s ability to remain competitive as a place for businesses to invest in. In case the Democrats don’t realize it, it is those businesses that create the jobs they claim to care about,” said Senator DeLuca.

Democratic leaders have tried to re-cast themselves as pro-business but their tacit support of this legislation confirms that their rhetoric is insincere, Republicans said.

The legislation would require franchises with at least 5,000 employees to pay into a state-run fund operated by the Department of Labor \$2.50 per hour per employee up to 40 hours a week, or roughly \$5,000 per year. Employers would be given credits reducing their mandatory payments to the fund if they provide health care coverage to their workers.

The retailers affected are among the most familiar names in the state and country in all sectors of business, from retail outlets to large box stores and fast food franchises.

Republicans warned that this early version of the bill could change to capture many more businesses and reminded the public it was originally written by labor unions to punish the giant Wal-Mart chain.

They noted that a flyer circulated urging the public to attend a Democratic press conference today on the issue stated, "What's Good for Wal-Mart is not good for the Country," and was distributed by union activists.

"The Democrats have once again shown themselves to be a wholly owned subsidiary of the unions," Republicans said.